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ABSTRACT

This report attempts to present the main issues that emerged in the discussion during the four topical sessions and three roundtables of the second meeting of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All. The Forum reflected the widespread dissatisfaction over the irrelevance and poor quality of much basic education today, as well as the concern that expansion of basic education provision must not, and need not, lead to a lower quality of learning. The Forum's deliberations may be useful to policymakers and professionals concerned with development and with basic education. The volume contains the following topics for discussion, roundtables and annexes. Part 1, "Quality Education for All," lists the following topics: (1) "Early Childhood Development"; (2) "Improving Primary Schooling"; (3) "Improving Nonformal Primary Education"; and (4) "Financing Quality Basic Education." Roundtables include the following: (1) "Basic Education for Girls and Women"; (2) "New Partnerships for EFA"; and (3) "Education and the Media." The appendices include: (1) "Forum Programme and List of Documents"; (2) "Keynote Speech by Federico Mayor"; and (3) "List of Participants." (EH)

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QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL

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SECOND MEETING
NEW DELHI
8-10 SEPTEMBER 1993

INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATIVE FORUM ON EDUCATION FOR ALL

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FINAL REPORT

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INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATIVE
FORUM ON EDUCATION FOR ALL

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PREFACE

«Education for All» (EFA) is both a concept and a goal with an evident quantitative dimension, calling to mind the numbers of illiterate and semi-literate adults, unschooled children and school drop-outs — victims of inadequate education systems, poverty, and uninformed public policy and investment. Other victims are less immediately evident: the millions of students and literate adults whose basic learning needs also are not met.

Yet, Education for All has an integral qualitative dimension. The World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, March 1990) affirmed that education must meet the basic learning needs of the learner. Since the learning needs of the individual, and the collective learning needs of a society, evolve over time, this qualitative aspect of Education for All requires never-ending attention, even in (imaginary) countries with a 100% enrolment ratio and a fully literate adult population.

At its first meeting (Paris, December 1991), the International Consultative Forum on Education for All, the global mechanism established to monitor Jomtien follow-up action, focused its discussion on the prospects for providing universal access to primary education — a key goal driving educational development since the early 1960s. Even in the essentially quantitative context of that discussion, the interconnectedness of quality and quantity in educational provision was evident: simply stated, good quality education attracts and retains learners in greater numbers.

At its second meeting (New Delhi, September 1993), the Forum focused its deliberations on «quality Education for All», reflecting the widespread dissatisfaction over the irrelevance and poor quality of much basic education today, as well as the concern that expansion of basic education provision must not, and need not, lead to a lower quality of learning.

This report attempts, in a few pages, to present the main issues that emerged in the Forum's discussion during the four topical sessions - Early childhood development (Topic 1); Improving primary schooling (Topic 2); Improving nonformal primary education (Topic 3) and Financing quality basic education (Topic 4) - as well as the three roundtables: New partnerships in Education for All (A); Basic education for girls and women (B); and the Contribution of the media to EFA (C). [See Annex A, the Forum Programme and List of Documents].

The limited time available for discussion prevented a comprehensive treatment of each subject, but it is perhaps instructive to note which issues and priorities found a place in the discussion. Readers seeking a more thorough treatment of the discussion topics are invited to consult the background papers, which may be obtained from the Forum Secretariat.

Although the Forum did not adopt recommendations or formulate proposals to governments or other bodies, its deliberations, as reported in the following pages, may be useful to policy-makers and professionals concerned with development and with basic education.

The second meeting of the Forum was hosted by the Government of India from 8 through 10 September 1993 in New Delhi, and the inaugural session was held in conjunction with the host country's celebration of International Literacy Day in the presence of the President of India. On behalf of the Forum's Steering Committee and Secretariat, I wish to express our sincere appreciation to the host country authorities, and especially the Minister of Human Resource Development, who inaugurated the Forum meeting, as well as to the New Delhi offices of UNDP, UNESCO and UNICEF, for their cooperation and support in organizing the meeting. Our thanks go also to the many persons who worked diligently both inside the meeting rooms and behind the scenes to ensure that the Forum could conduct its deliberations effectively.

MICHAEL LAKIN
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
EFA FORUM SECRETARIAT

SUMMARY OF GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

In reviewing progress by countries and the international community in implementing the FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION TO MEET BASIC LEARNING NEEDS adopted at Jomtien in 1990, the Forum drew the following conclusions.

Around 120 countries have taken some action to follow up the Jomtien Conference at national level; of these, over 100 report that they have set their own EFA goals. However, there are still a large number of countries that appear to have taken no follow-up action in the three-and-a-half years since Jomtien and have yet to set their EFA goals and design strategies to attain them.

Despite widespread recognition of the importance of educating girls and women, both as their human right and as a prerequisite for socio-economic development, there is not yet a dramatic improvement at the global level. The basic education of girls and women definitely needs more attention, particularly as a highly cost-effective investment.

Some countries have reallocated funds within their education budget to strengthen basic education, usually at the expense of higher education; but in general, such measures alone will not produce sufficient resources for quality basic education. The time has come for governments to shift additional resources into education from other, less cost-effective investments.

External funding for basic education has grown since 1990 but seems to have reached a plateau, which may be due to competing demands for aid (e.g. environment, emergency relief), but also to a dearth of fundable requests put forward with conviction. Developing countries will need to define their priorities for external funding more carefully, while relying more on their own resources.

Bilateral donors, with few exceptions, have not come forward in support of advocacy, monitoring and cooperative actions for EFA at global level since the Jomtien Conference.

Sub-Saharan Africa requires particular support from the world community, without which EFA will remain out of reach for most African countries.

The estimated additional cost (US$10 billion per year) of achieving universal primary school enrolment by the year 2000 is within the reach of the world community as a whole, particularly if the additional expenditure were offset by relatively minor reductions in military spending. Such a giant step toward Education for All is financially and technically still possible, but firm political will is needed for it to happen.

In its deliberations on the special theme, «quality education for all», the Forum took note of several means through which significant improvements in quality can be obtained, often within current resource levels. Even when additional costs are incurred, they may be largely offset by educational and social benefits, such as reduced repetition and drop-out, reduced delinquency, better health, and increased productivity.

Well conceived early childhood development (ECD) programmes help meet the diverse developmental needs of young children during the crucial early years and enhance the readiness of children for schooling. ECD is clearly an integral part of basic education and should be planned together with primary education, adult education and other social sector interventions (e.g. health).

Primary education in many countries is characterized by an inappropriate curriculum, poor teaching, and poor levels of learning. The simple application of existing knowledge about the teaching/learning process can lead to significant improvements in the quality of primary education.

Alternative (nonformal) education programmes often demonstrate ingenuity in meeting the learning needs of certain groups of learners, but tend to remain marginal. Formal schooling should learn from the experience gained in alternative programmes, thus becoming less «formal», while nonformal programmes should be planned and managed to interact synergetically with schools, in effect becoming more «formal».

The print and audio-visual and traditional media in modern societies stand to benefit as the level of education and cultural sophistication of a population rises. Whereas educators generally are well equipped to determine the appropriate content and methodology for basic learning, the media are generally more experienced in the production and attractive «packaging» of information. When educators and media experts work together, each using their relative advantage, the quality and outreach of basic education can be dramatically improved.

There is gathering evidence that improvements in the quality of basic education can be obtained by carefully targeting resources and decentralizing their management.

Partnerships between government, business, local communities and nongovernmental organizations can be effective in improving the quality of basic education by making better use of existing resources and expanding the resource base available. However, such partnerships can and need to be developed more broadly than is now the case; the business community in developing countries is still largely outside the EFA movement.

REVIEW OF PROGRESS TOWARDS EFA: CHANGING THE TREND

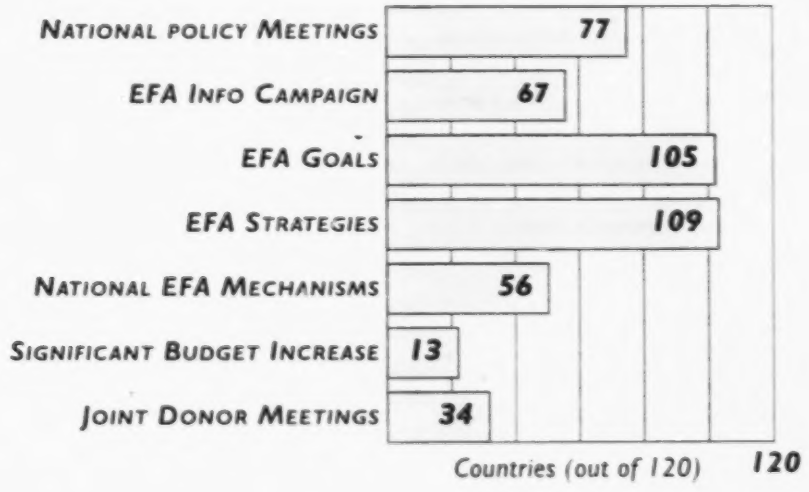
During its review of progress in implementing the FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION TO MEET BASIC LEARNING NEEDS approved at the Jomtien Conference (1990), the Forum noted that at least 120 countries reported having taken some follow-up action [see chart]. For example, 77 countries held national level Education for All (EFA) policy meetings; 105 established EFA goals for the 1990s; 109 designed EFA strategies or plans of action. So far, however, only 56 countries report having set up a national «EFA mechanism» to promote and/or monitor progress, and only 13 have made a significant budget increase to strengthen basic (primary) education.

More worrying is the fact that there are still many states, including most of the industrialized world, that apparently have taken no specific follow-up action and have neither EFA goals nor strategies to improve the provision of basic education. Among the industrialized countries, the perception persists that Jomtien was about EFA in the developing world and only concerns them, if at all, in their role as donors.

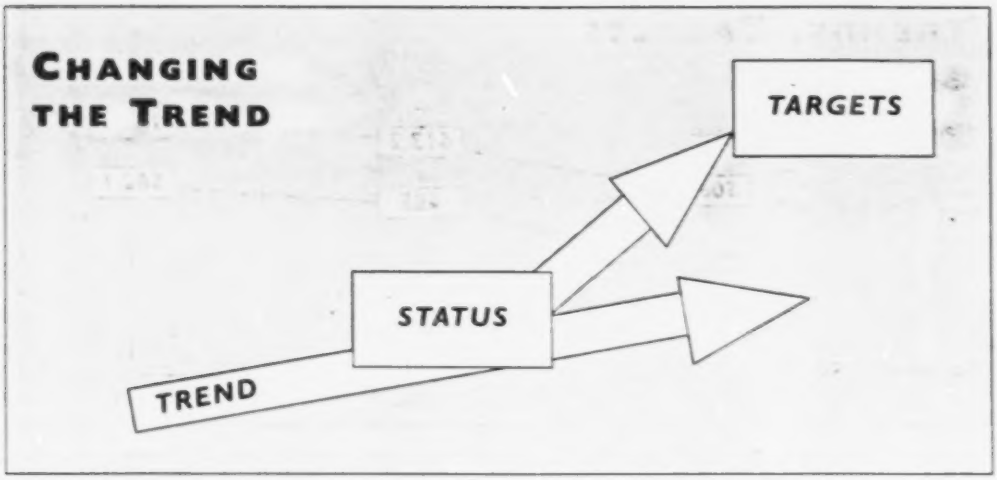
The Forum also surveyed selected UNESCO statistics and projections to assess the status and trends of basic education in countries around the world.[1] If present trends continue and *if no major EFA effort is made*, the absolute number of illiterate adults in the world will decrease slightly from 948 million in 1990 to 935 millions by year 2000. However, population growth during the same decade will increase the number of out-of-school children from 128 million to 162 million. The main increase will occur in Sub-Saharan Africa: from 25 million to 38 million during the 1990s.

Analyzing the root causes of gender disparities in access to quality basic education, the Forum found that unless countries design and rapidly implement specific, intensive, corrective actions, the male-female educational gap is likely to persist, and in some countries even widen, throughout the 1990s. Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia are the regions most affected. While certain countries have made progress in improving gender equity, no significant, measureable improvement in the education of girls and women is evident at the global level.

THE EFA PROCESS IN COUNTRIES



[1] *The Forum Secretariat prepared a report entitled* EDUCATION FOR ALL: STATUS AND TRENDS *(UNESCO, 1993) that provided most of the data presented to the Forum and quoted here. The full report is available from the Forum Secretariat.*



Comparative indicators of learning achievement are not readily available in most developing countries, but the Forum inferred from repetition and survival rates in primary schooling that the quality of instruction needs particular attention in Latin America & the Caribbean, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa - regions where less than two out of three pupils reach the fourth year of schooling. Other factors have obviously contributed to this situation, which was seen to reflect systemic inefficiency that raises the unit cost per school leaver and reduces places for new entrants.

Data from a few African countries highlighted another «quality» problem associated with the wide range of ages found in the early grades. First year classes, for instance, may contain children from five to thirteen years old, which is a difficult challenge for the teachers, many of whom have little or no pedagogical training.

Relatively few developing countries appear to have reallocated funds within their education budget to strengthen basic education. In a few cases, however, such reallocation has been done at the expense of higher education. Several speakers felt that in any case, such measures will not produce sufficient resources for quality basic education. «*The time has come for many governments to shift more resources into basic education from other, less cost-effective investments outside the education sector.*»

EXTERNAL SUPPORT FOR EFA

The four original sponsors of the Jomtien Conference are fulfilling their pledge to reallocate additional resources to support EFA action at the country level. The World Bank has almost doubled its lending earmarked for the development of basic education, from about US$500 million in 1990 to US$1 billion in 1993. The United Nations Development Programme also reports a doubling of its grant funding for basic education; two-thirds of its approved country programmes for 1992-1996 include such funding. UNICEF is moving steadily toward its goal of allocating 25 per cent of its development funds for EFA by 1995. UNESCO, although not a funding agency, has significantly expanded literacy and primary education activities, the top priority of its education programme.

Other multilateral agencies, such as the Asian Development Bank and the United Nations Population Fund, are also currently giving more attention to funding EFA projects and activities, often in close cooperation with the original Jomtien sponsors.

Bilateral funding for EFA, which is difficult to monitor, presents a more varied picture. Overall, external funding for basic education has grown since 1990, but appears to have reached a plateau, possibly due to reductions in certain national aid budgets and competition from other sectors (e.g. environment, emergency relief). Some donor agencies report that while they are ready to fund the development of basic education, they do not receive eligible requests for funding from governments committed to EFA.

The Forum felt that developing countries need to define their external funding priorities more carefully, and move towards a greater reliance on their own resources to achieve EFA. There are critical exceptions: without external assistance from the world

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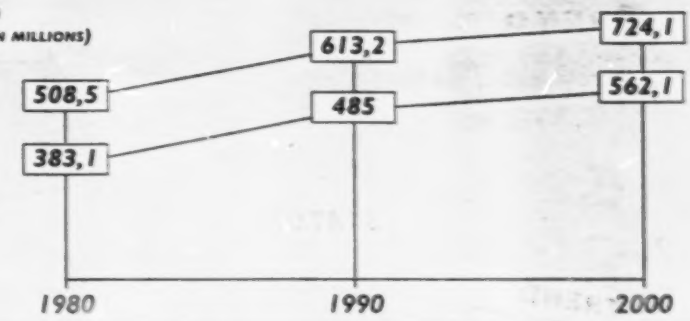
GLOBAL STATUS, TRENDS, TARGETS

SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN: TOTAL AND ENROLLED
(ESTIMATE 1980 - 2000 IN MILLIONS)



SOURCE : UNESCO

community. Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, will be unable to attain EFA. One participant deplored the world's failure to help Africa from sliding backwards and called for the negotiation of «compacts» between governments and donors in support of EFA and other types of social action.

A few systematic projections have been made of the cost of achieving universal primary school enrolment during the 1990s. Although estimates of the additional cost vary between US$6 billion and US$10 billion annually, this level of funding is clearly within reach of the world community. Relatively minor reductions in military spending alone could free resources adequate for this purpose. However, while a giant step toward Education for All is financially and technically possible, it cannot, and will not happen without firm political will and concerted global action.

A MORE EFFECTIVE FORUM

In respect to its own responsibilities, the Forum noted that bilateral donor agencies, with few exceptions, have failed to contribute to global level advocacy, monitoring, and cooperative actions. One participant stressed the continuing need for advocacy of EFA, in both the North and the South.

The absence of senior government policy-makers and key financial decision-makers at the Forum was noted with concern. Representation of the developing countries at the two meetings of the Forum has been largely through educators. *«The EFA Forum should not end up as a forum of educators preaching to educators. It is not educators who re-allocate resources, but finance ministers...and where are they?»* lamented one participant. Another observed that *«One-third of the governments [i.e. officials] invited failed to turn up. The key players must be present.»* Turnover of officials at the national level may be part of the explanation: *«About 90 per cent of the government ministers who participated in Jomtien have disappeared from the scene.»* noted Forum organizers. Other speakers pointed out that certain regions, like the Arab States, as well as the influential research community, were visibly underrepresented at the meeting.

It was agreed that the representation of governments in the developing regions must be strengthened at future Forum meetings, perhaps by providing more empirical information for discussion on the costs and benefits and outcomes of investments in education. *«We need to strengthen the hand of the ministers of education when they do battle with their colleagues in the finance and other ministries,»* suggested one participant.

The challenge is to design an agenda that appeals to policy-makers and to practitioners, and that allows adequate time for discussion of important issues. Some donor representatives expressed the hope that future Forum meetings would produce recommendations regarding priorities and promising strategies that could guide government and donor policy-making.

Other suggestions to strengthen the Forum and the EFA alliance included creating national EFA task forces, «decentralizing» the Forum's deliberations by holding more issue-specific regional forums to complement its global meetings, and increasing the frequency of the latter.

The Forum requested the Steering Committee to examine these matters and suggested that all Jomtien co-sponsors and associate sponsors be invited to participate at its next meeting [in early 1994].

QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL

THEMATIC SESSIONS

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Since learning begins at birth, by the time children enter primary school they have already passed through a crucial phase of their development that largely determines how they will fare later on in life. It is during these early years that the foundations are laid and skills acquired for continued learning in and out of school.

The Forum reiterated the importance of early childhood care and development (ECD) and its important place in the «expanded vision of basic education» elaborated at the 1990 Jomtien Conference. *«ECD programmes are the first step in achieving EFA goals. ECD is critical in the formation of intelligence, personality, and the social behaviour of young children.»* Some participants expressed concern, however, that the drive to universalize and reform primary education had shifted attention away from ECD. Also, investment in ECD was sometimes seen as potentially diverting funding away from primary education rather than as a complementary social investment.

The Forum's discussion of early childhood development revolved around the following aspects: the content of ECD programmes; their beneficiaries; the role of parents; the link between ECD and primary schooling; and the cost of ECD programmes.

THE HOLISTIC APPROACH

During their early years, children develop and mature both physically and intellectually, requiring not only protection, food, and health care, but also stimulation, interaction with others, and learning opportunities. The discussion brought forth a wide variety of early childhood care and development programmes, showing that ECD programmes cover much more that «pre-schools» (Kindergarten).

ECD refers to a range of activities that address the various needs of young children and help strengthen the families and communities in which they develop, as well as their physical, socio-cultural and economic environments. This integrated approach is an essential and defining feature of early childhood development programmes and one that sets them apart from the conventional school.

Against the background of the on-going conflicts in many parts of the world, some speakers stressed the importance of early childhood education in fostering tolerance and respect for others. Peace education should start at an early age in order to be most effective.

WHO BENEFITS FROM ECD PROGRAMMES?

The discussion revealed that early childhood education in many developing countries is characterized by institutionalized pre-school programmes that are expensive and age-restricted. As one speaker put it, «*such programmes reflect current social inequalities because they serve mainly the cultural and economic elite*». Statistics reveal gross disparities between countries in the coverage of pre-school services. However, even where pre-school enrolment ratios are relatively high, children from disadvantaged families and poor areas often have little or no access to such services.

Participants agreed that marginal, urban and rural communities should be a priority target for ECD interventions. According to several speakers, an urgent task is to reach the rapidly growing numbers of children and families «at risk». These include, for example, refugees and displaced persons, children suffering from the traumas of war and violence, and the growing number of AIDS orphans. Young children with disabilities constitute another target group for special attention in ECD programmes.

EDUCATING PARENTS

Parents are the prime caregivers of small children. Their skills and competence, as well as the well-being of the family as a whole, have far-reaching implications for the developmental and educational processes of early childhood. For example, lack of parental knowledge about child care has been identified as contributing to poor health, nutrition, and retarded development. Also, where children grow up with a single parent, in poor housing, and lack basic food and hygiene, their overall development is likely to be impaired.

The active participation of parents and communities in ECD activities was cited as a key component for their success, ensuring that such activities are culturally sensitive, meaningful and sustainable. Parents should be involved in the planning, operation and financing of programmes targeted at young children. Early childhood development efforts sometimes include far-reaching parent education and involvement [see box on the Parent Effectiveness Service in the Philippines].

Holistic ECD programmes can merge almost seamlessly with adult education, literacy and population programmes. This also illustrates the concept of a «cycle of learning» starting at, or even before, birth and continuing throughout adulthood. Some participants emphasized the importance of parents' education as part of ECD efforts because of the well-established link between parents' literacy skills and children's learning achievement.

ECD AND PRIMARY SCHOOLING

One of the basic premises of the Forum's discussion was that early childhood development programmes are important in preparing children for further learning. Numerous examples and studies were mentioned in support of this, some indicating that even a few months of early childhood stimulation can greatly enhance the benefits a child can draw from primary schooling. Such psychological and physiological preparation also correlates with reduced repetition and drop-out rates.

Yet, one speaker felt that the synergy between education before and during primary schooling is still not taken seriously enough. This may be because early childhood programmes are rarely part of the formal education system; the ministry of education usually plays only a limited role in such efforts, if at all.

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PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION IN KENYA - A PARTNERSHIP VENTURE

Kenya, in co-operation with international donors, is running an effective pre-school programme, increasing children's preparedness for primary school at the same time as helping mothers who juggle full-time work outside the home with child rearing responsibilities.

The pre-schools, which serve families from different social, economic, and cultural backgrounds, cover 30 per cent of Kenya's children age three to six, and 95 per cent of those enrolled in pre-schools.

The programme's overall objective is to «improve the overall welfare of children» through a holistic approach combining health, nutrition, growth monitoring, early stimulation, and parental and community awareness.

Kenya has undergone rapid socio-economic changes in recent years, with massive urbanisation, increasing population pressure and a growing number of working women. Many women, who are often the sole breadwinners for their families, have been forced to leave their children unattended for, or with inadequate child care in order to work outside the home. A frustrating situation for parents and their children, the pre-school programme has proven to be the preferred solution. Enrolment grew from 657,700 children in 1986 to 908,970 in 1991, a 38 per cent jump.

Parents see the benefits not only because their children are better looked after and more ready to start primary school, but also because they are healthier and more outgoing than those who have not attended pre-school. Another postive result is increased community mobilization, and greater parental awareness of food preparation, nutrition, family planning, immunization, early stimulation, etc.

Originating in the *harambee* or «self-help» movement after independence, the programme stresses «partnerships» between a wide range of actors, with parents and local communities the most important ones. Parents provide land, school buildings, furniture, materials, and teacher salaries, often with assistance from local bodies at the district level, including religious organizations and companies. Some have also initiated community-based feeding programmes and growth monitoring schemes.

Teacher trainers and teachers are also considered «key players». Trainers undergo a nine month introduction course, and teachers receive a two-year inservice training. Issues such as human relations, effective communication, needs of families and problem-solving are discussed in order to equip the trainees with the necessary skills to cater for the children, as well as their parents, local communities, and sponsors.

In 1984, the Government set up a *National Centre for Early Childhood Education* as well as a network of «sub-centres» at the district level. Through the centres, the Ministry of Education, in co-operation with the Bernard van Leer Foundation, the Aga Kahn Foundation, and UNICEF, supports the programme with overall administration, in-service training, supervision, curriculum and materials development, evaluation and research. Close co-operation has also been initiated with other ministries, such as health and culture and social services.

Despite the success of the programme, there are important challenges ahead. The most pressing issue is perhaps the extremely low and irregular salaries of teachers, which have forced many in recent years to leave their jobs in order to look for alternative employment. Furthermore, teacher training needs to be upgraded, and special programmes need to be introduced for children in difficult circumstances, such as street children, the disabled, and refugee children. This is a serious problem, as their numbers are increasing and existing programmes have failed to provide them with adequate care.

(Based on *A Case Study of Early Childhood Care and Education in Kenya*,
by Lea I. Kipkorir and Anne W. Njenga)

Early childhood development activities can also provide valuable inspiration for improving primary schooling. «*ECD practices like parental and community involvement have much to contribute to improving the functioning of primary education*» stated one participant. For example, most ECD programmes are easily accessible and use strategies that are responsive to their communities. Good programmes emphasize non-formal methods of teaching and learning, develop and use stimulating and relevant curricula for children and parents, and are especially effective in creating opportunities for girls and women.

Moreover, ECD programmes that work closely with communities are well-positioned to reach children and families most in need. As one participant noted: «*ECD programmes yield benefits not only to children, but to parents and communities. They offer opportunities to women to pursue work outside the home by providing a secure environment for their children. And in this way, they contribute to the empowerment of communities.*» They can also act as catalysts for cooperation between a variety of EFA stakeholders, stimulating inter-sectoral partnerships between health and education, for example, or between parents and local authorities.

ECD AND PRIMARY SCHOOLING

Keeping the cost of early childhood care and development services manageable is one of the most effective ways to increase access to these programmes. Some speakers expressed concern that the expansion of ECD services on a large scale would require both a massive initial investment and considerable recurrent costs, and therefore would not be sustainable. However, there exist a number of effective, low-cost alternatives to the conventional but costly pre-schools found in industrialized countries. For example, early childhood development activities can be home-based, run by volunteers and para-professionals, or incorporated into on-going adult education and community development programmes.

It was also pointed out that the cost of ECD activities must be examined in relation to their benefits. If investment in child care and development has important pay-offs, such as reducing school wastage and freeing family caregivers for employment, ECD programmes may well have favourable social benefit-cost ratios to justify public investment.

The Forum called for greater donor support to help developing countries expand ECD programmes. Several speakers felt that donor agencies should take the initiative to approach governments, rather than waiting for requests for such aid. Furthermore, donors should be prepared to make long-term commitments to support early childhood programmes. In a closing remark, one participant appealed for more world solidarity to help close the gap between rich and poor countries in the care and development of young children. ■

THE PARENT EFFECTIVENESS SERVICE (PES)

Investing in Parents to Invest in Children

Operating at the national, regional, municipal, and village levels, the **Parent Effectiveness Service** (PES), is part of a larger drive to improve early childhood care and development within the Philippines. PES encompasses a wide range of programmes, policies, and services for parents in recognition of their multiple role as caregivers, providers, and teachers of children from infancy through adolescence.

Started in 1979 as part of the Philippine Plan of Action for Children, PES has become the main component in a holistic, home-based early childhood care and development (ECCD) programme that attends to the needs of 0-3 year olds who have not been reached or served by the center-based programs, such as day care service.

Managed by the Philippine government and NGOs, with financial support from UNICEF, PES has expanded remarkably from its modest beginnings to serve more than 160,000 parents in 1,500 municipalities in 14 regions in the country. By 1992, the programme had reached roughly 192,146 children across the archipelago.

The philosophy of PES is that Filipino parents are ultimately the architects of the shared vision for families and communities needed to attain national goals for children. To do this, PES must devise strategies to reach parents and *«transform them into child development agents at home.»*

Parent education is viewed as essential to achieving broader social, economic and political reform for the most vulnerable sector of Filipino society: its children. By educating parents, PES provides them with the support they need to meet their responsibilities to their children. As more active community members, parents are also in a better position to compel the government to provide basic social services.

The main strategy PES has adopted is the organization of **Neighborhood Parent Assemblies (NPEA)**, small groups of parents at the *barangay* (village) level that provide a support system for developing parenting skills, and building better parent-child and family relationships. A few examples of changes in child-rearing practices that parents discuss and aim for in the NPEA sessions are:

* Giving children nutritious food and avoiding junk food
* Stopping abusive punishment of children
* Encouraging children to be self-reliant
* Talking and explaining things to children
* Teaching children proper values

Through the NPEA, and a range of community- and home-based programmes, PES aims to challenge the traditional concept of parenting as primarily a female function and responsibilty. By emphasizing the participation of fathers *and* mothers - as well as single parents - PES has made a significant contribution to consciousness-raising for achieving gender equity. For example, parents and caregivers - both male and female - are sensitized to gender issues, and as a result have tended to adopt gender-fair child rearing practices.

The PES lesson is clear: *«an investment in parents is a major investment in child survival, growth and development»*

(Source: «Parents As Learners: Towards Partnership and Participation - Parent Education Programs in the Philippines», Philippine Television Foundation.)

IMPROVING PRIMARY SCHOOLING

That education must be a qualitative undertaking is a fundamental premise of Education for All (EFA). Yet improving primary schooling is not merely a matter of setting standards for what quality education, in an ideal world, should be. Educators must confront the realities of what education is and can be in their corner of the world today.

This need for a pragmatic approach was evident in the discussion on **Improving Primary Schooling**. In the words of one Forum participant: *«There is a need to set high standards, but to use pragmatism as we work with those standards.»* The Forum took a careful look at the «hows» and «whys» of getting children to school, keeping them there, and ensuring that the education they receive is of acceptable quality and relevance. Greater participation in the educational process - from teachers, from the community, and from the learners themselves - was identified as a pressing concern.

Looking at the situation of primary schooling from a holistic and reform perspective, the Forum identified three key inter-related issues that need to be addressed:

- the curriculum and learning materials;
- teachers and teaching; and
- community participation.

DEFINING RELEVANCE

The drive to make the curriculum more «relevant» - more responsive to the local community, culture and values - is a clear EFA priority. But in many countries, educators and the authorities must deal with the dilemna that too much attention to certain «relevant» local values could undermine overall EFA goals. What, for example, should educators do in communities that do not deem schooling as «relevant» to girls's traditional role in the family and society?

Another dilemna in some countries is how to balance the need for more responsive, even diverse, curricula with the goal of developing national unity. In multi-lingual societies, such as Papua New Guinea, where over 300 languages are spoken, excessive decentralization of curriculum development and attention to local relevance could pose a threat to national identity and hence to political unity and stability.

Recent studies of primary learning in multi-lingual countries suggest that it takes children in these societies longer to move through the primary cycle of schooling. Thus, the impact of curriculum reform and policy regarding the language(s) of instruction must be carefully monitored. Societies with difficult language situations might need to consider lengthening the primary school cycle to enable their children to master literacy skills.

UNBURDENING THE CURRICULUM

There is a serious conflict to be resolved between the need for a solid, core curriculum focused on basic skills versus demands for a broader, more community-responsive curriculum that includes «life skills», demands that are often related to donor-driven advocacy issues, such as nutrition, family planning, environmental education, and AIDS prevention. *«The scope of the primary education curriculum»* warned one participant, *«has moved beyond the capacity of teachers to teach and children to learn. The expansion of the curriculum has had an impact on the demand for materials which cannot continue.»*

The need to strike a healthy balance between «basic learning skills» and «life skills» is urgent, otherwise the curriculum may become so hopelessly overburdened that children will fail to learn even to read and write. Some participants suggested that topical subjects like AIDS prevention, health education, and water management could be shifted to nonformal and adult education channels, possibly combined with literacy programmes. Teacher education faces a similar dilemma. *«There is too much training of esoterica, and not enough of the basics...We must also master print materials before we go to the electronic media.»*

There was general agreement that the primary curriculum should emphasize the development of basic skills, but that these skills should be broadly defined so that children would gain *«the ability to articulate their feelings, categorize reality, and describe their experience.»*

STABILIZING THE CURRICULUM

Constant shifts in curricula due to changing political circumstances was cited as a problem in many countries. Governments and donor agencies have failed to assess the cost of constant curriculum changes in terms of new textbooks, other instructional materials and the retraining of teachers.

The need for a more systematic and sequenced approach to curriculum development and textbook publishing was stressed. In some cases, the production of learning materials could be decentralized to encourage local initiatives and a greater involvement of the community, NGOs, teachers, and the learners themselves. Donor agencies need to consider the possibility of working with NGOs to produce materials locally. Of course this will require government support through policies and coordinated procedures - both within the education ministry (curriculum development centres, teacher training institutions) and by other ministries dealing with information, commerce, finance, and planning.

EFFECTIVE LEARNING MATERIALS

Transforming the curriculum into good learning materials and tools for teachers was singled out as a critical and neglected link in the teaching-learning chain. There was a general feeling that learning materials need to be adapted to the capacities of the learners, not vice versa. *«The starting point of the curriculum is critical. Before the age of 6-7, a child already possesses a body of knowledge and experience, a way of categorizing and managing his or her environment. But this is not recognized by the schools.»* Many countries lack the skilled professionals required to produce good learning materials, and several participants suggested that more support be given to book production, distribution, and «book sector studies» with a view to strengthening endogeneous book industries.

Some participants questioned the preoccupation of schools with the «ownership» of textbooks. Often, the cost of providing textbooks and other learning materials, which is a burden for parents and governments, could be substantially decreased by retaining books in the school and by encouraging the local production of materials.

TEACHER MOTIVATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Improving the quality of teaching was at the centre of the Forum's deliberations. Motivating teachers to assume greater «ownership» of both their schools and their training was flagged as a pressing concern. *«If EFA is to succeed, teachers must be treated as participants, not just employees.»* Teacher education must not only ground teachers in the basics, but also empower them to participate actively in defining basic learning needs and how to meet them. The importance of integrating all aspects of teacher management and providing teachers with effective logistical support, compensation commensurate with professional training, and a more favourable career structure was stressed.

The Forum also recognized the key role of the principal or headteacher in teacher management and support, and more broadly, in school reform and innovation. Schools in remote areas need special attention in this regard, since many of them are single-teacher schools, or do not have a headteacher. In-service training, perhaps using distance education techniques, plus various teacher support schemes, could be a solution. It was noted, however, that in-service training should not be used as a cheap alternative to pre-service training.

Teachers should be empowered to make choices about teaching methods and given more leeway to adapt the curriculum to the needs of their pupils. One participant observed that *«Teachers know more about how to do than what to do»* In fact, *«It is not uncommon to find that teachers know more about teaching than the teacher training colleges»*. While governments must take overall responsibility for teacher training, greater efforts could be made locally to encourage and support peer structures and professional associations that enable teachers to share skills and experiences among themselves.

High standards for teacher selection, training and certification conflict with the reality of many countries, where teachers will remain under-trained and under-qualified for many years to come. What, then, can be done to provide more effective training, a well-structured curriculum, and regular supervision and support? The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) was cited as an example of how intensive training and a rigid curriculum can empower under-qualified teachers. However, the temptation to use an inflexible curriculum and «teacher-proof» materials to overcome the inadequacies of poorly prepared teachers deserves careful reflection. *«We must not make textbooks so prescriptive that they don't allow any initiative from teachers. If the process becomes mechanical, teachers will no longer be able to practice the art of teaching.»*

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Generating and sustaining community participation in the school depends on the value attributed to, and the demand for, education by parents and community leaders. The perceived relevance of the curriculum is an important factor. A community is more likely to be interested, for example, in a school that is seen to provide useful knowledge about health problems and work skills .

Many participants lamented that schools in their countries are seldom embedded in the local communities. Often, active community participation is closely correlated not with government intervention and leadership, but with the presence and activity of NGOs. Sri Lanka's religious schools, for example, have enhanced demand for and participation in primary education. In other countries, NGO-sponsored courses for AIDS prevention, nutrition, and adult literacy have strengthened community support for schooling.

One factor that has impeded community participation is that governments tend to see community participation as a means to «mobilize» or «extract» local resources for education. However, experience suggests that participation is more genuine and sustainable when the community is involved in needs assessment, goal-setting, programme planning, and management of the school. But to what extent can the community be expected to supervise or help manage the local schools? In many rural areas, where education ministry supervision is non-existant or intermittant at best, unscheduled closings, teacher absenteeism, and other disruptions are endemic and impact negatively on the quality of primary education.

How can communities become more actively involved in their schools in order to break what one participant described as a steady, downward spiral of low community involvement, poorly motivated teachers, low pupil achievement, reduced demand for education, and even lower community involvement? In parts of India, to cite one example, parents have taken an active role in monitoring whether schools are open and teachers are present. ■

IMPROVING NONFORMAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

Nonformal education - once thought of as a marginal, second-class alternative to the regular school system - is now seen by some observers as *«the core and cutting edge»* of the drive toward Education For All. Not only have nonformal education programmes succeeded to deliver basic education where the regular schools have failed, but their successes have inspired the formal school system to rethink teaching and learning.

Faced with the shortcomings of the formal school and its failure, in many countries, to reach the mass of children, the use of nonformal approaches to extend basic education provision has become imperative. In the words of one participant: *«If we look at the 30-40 countries where the formal system has no way of reaching every child within the next decade, we must recognize and accept that no amount of formal education will solve their EFA needs.»*

MOVING FROM «ISLANDS OF EXPERIMENTATION»

Keeping nonformal education, with its innovative and flexible pedagogical strategies, at the cutting edge of the EFA initiative was a recurrent theme in the discussion on Improving Nonformal Primary Education. For the Forum, the question is no longer whether nonformal education should be expanded, but **how** - both as remedial or complementary education for disadvantaged children and adults, as well as an approach to help the masses of learners in the mainstream school system. The Forum agreed that promoting nonformal education and ensuring that successful efforts do not remain *«small islands of experimentation»* will require far greater resources and support at all levels of the governmental hierarchy.

The power of nonformal education approaches, it was agreed, lies in their ability both to act as a bridge to the formal system and to achieve impressive results outside of it. The nonformal classes run by the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), for example, have reached hundreds of thousands of children. How to replicate on a large scale the elements of successful nonformal programmes was one of the key questions addressed by the Forum: *«Our targets are in the millions. We cannot afford to luxuriate in small village successes. We must find elements capable of making a major impact.»*

The challenge is to identify the more innovative programmes for replication and possible export to other countries, not as complete packages, but as flexible modules. Several participants noted that even the best nonformal *«models»* often fail to take root in foreign soil, especially if they are imposed without adaptation to the local culture and circumstances or if the original success depended on a charismatic individual. Replication of successful nonformal schemes depends, to a large degree, on the acceptance of their underlying ideas and methods by key government officials and community leaders. *«The challenge is not so much cloning the charismatic people who make the non-formal systems work, but to train government planners to act and think like them.»*

DE-FORMALIZING THE FORMAL SYSTEM

The next step in the EFA process should be *«de-formalizing the formal system, and linking it with all the non-formal alternatives out there»*. De-formalizing the school appears to be most urgent in countries that have high gross enrolment ratios but that do not move forward. Age-specific enrolment statistics

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reveal many over-stretched school systems full of over-age students due to chronic grade repetition. However, if such systems were reformed to *«un-clog»* them, more pupils could be provided a better quality of basic education.

Just as there is a need for de-formalizing the formal school system, some speakers felt that nonformal programmes could benefit from a degree of formalization, which could help give them more stability and give their learners better access to the mainstream - in effect bringing the two sub-systems closer together.

REDUCING DISPARITIES DUE TO GENDER AND GEOGRAPHY

For a variety of reasons, the formal school has excluded, alienated or failed to reach and educate learners who are disadvantaged by gender and/or geography. The girl-child in many communities and children of both sexes in remote or poor areas, as well as street people, nomads and refugees, are among the unreached and poorly educated. Yet, nonformal education programmes have proved effective in reducing such disparities in access to quality basic education.

With gender equity high on the EFA agenda, several examples were presented of innovative nonformal efforts to improve girls' and women's literacy and self-reliance. There was general agreement that these programmes owe their success to a holistic, integrated approach that treats the learner as a whole person and avoids a single, narrow focus on health, nutrition, literacy or income generation.

The discussion called attention to the fact that neither formal nor nonformal education have yet adequately addressed the often alarming gender gap reflected in data on illiteracy and educational achievement. Even in cases where nonformal education reaches girls and women, they may be further marginalized by the poor quality of that education, which fails to prepare them to (re)enter the formal school system or the workplace on an equal footing with boys and men.

Some speakers called for more quality control of nonformal programmes to ensure that the learners they reach, female and male, are ultimately able to benefit from formal schooling and/or compete in the workplace with school leavers. The current lack of social recognition of nonformal educational achievement was identified as another problem that must be dealt with, especially as it impacts disproportionately on girls and women, the majority of nonformal learners. Some participants warned against a discriminatory *«tracking»* of girls and women into the less recognized, under-funded nonformal education sub-sector, a phenomenon that exacerbates their disadvantaged position as *«second class citizens.»*

PARENTAL LITERACY AND CHILD LEARNING

Several speakers reminded the Forum that the nonformal education approach applies to programmes catering to youth and adults, as well as to children. Certain inter-generational synergies had already been mentioned in the prior discussion on early childhood development.

Well-documented studies have shown a significant correlation between parental literacy and children's achievement at school. Several Forum participants cited examples of how to link adult literacy programmes with children's education. For example, one participant related how nonformal programmes in Thailand have forged this crucial link by providing literacy training to the influential village headmen, other community leaders and the village development committees. This experience has shown that a more literate community leadership can significantly increase the demand for basic education. Another scheme involved *«walking teachers»* who were assigned to live in villages to become familiar with the people and local culture before organizing classes. One lesson to be drawn from such successful nonformal programmes is that this type of intervention cannot exist in isolation, either from the community or from the formal system.

AN UNTAPPED RESOURCE: TRADITIONAL, RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS

It was noted that in some countries the traditional or indigenous schools, if strengthened and reformed, could help bridge the gap between formal and nonformal education and could be integrated into the campaign for EFA. Buddhist temple schools in Asia and the Koranic schools that exist throughout the Islamic world were cited as traditional institutions that reach millions of children. Often overlooked by policy-makers and researchers, such institutions rarely figure in educational statistics and national education plans.

In Thailand, following the Jomtien Conference, the government decided to revitalize the 30,000 temple schools by increasing subsidies to help them revise their examinations and develop an equivalency system from primary through university levels. Under this new equivalency system - which now covers some 500,000 learners - a young man ordained as a monk can rejoin the state school system.

In Rajasthan (India), efforts have been made to bridge the gap between formal and non-formal education by intervening with the Mosque schools in Muslim communities. Although resistance was encountered, many imams and mullahs became convinced to assess the quality of their education programmes and identify deficiencies and improvements to be made in the curricula. The resultant alignment with the regular school curriculum has now made it possible for a child in such a reformed Mosque school to gain an equivalency permitting passage to the public school system.

IS THIS THE WHOLE STORY?

The Forum found the number of *«success stories»* about nonformal education was inspiring, but some speakers urged a more critical and balanced examination of such experiences. Pinpointing obstacles and limitations encountered along the way to success, it was suggested, would also be instructive for the Forum and the international community. *«We hear too little about the failures, the struggles, and the problems»* said one participant. *«Let's hear the whole story.»*

INTEGRATING NONFORMAL AND FORMAL EDUCATION

There is no longer any doubt that well managed nonformal education programmes can work and in some cases work better than the formal school system. The challenge, it was agreed, will be finding ways to gain public acceptance for these alternative programmes and to bring them into the mainstream of education.

The absence of bridges and synergies between formal and non-formal education was seen as a major problem. Many participants warned that if strong links are not forged between the two spheres, serious inequities are inevitable. *«We need to be careful that we do not create two parallel systems, separate but unequal»* said one speaker.

Non-formal education, it was agreed, must make more intensive and innovative use of functional equivalency, bridging programmes, and distance methods in order to attain - and be seen to have attained - the same standards of learning achievement as the regular system. Participants from donor agencies expressed interest in the measurement of non-formal learning achievement and questioned how the *«blanks»* in the formal school system are being filled by the non-formal approach and how to measure its inputs and outputs.

The Forum reiterated the need to integrate formal and nonformal education within a re-vitalized, unified system so *«that each child and adult has access to quality education»*. As learners move between formal and nonformal programmes, they must be empowered through quality education that will enable them to survive and prosper in their communities and in the increasingly complex and competitive global economy.

Governments, it was agreed, must assume a stronger and more pivotal role in coordinating formal and nonformal efforts into an integrated system - establishing general policies and standards, guaranteeing basic inputs, compensating for regional imbalances, and providing professional support. In this connection, questions arose regarding the institutional use of lessons learned in nonformal education. How can policy-makers establish linkages between formal and nonformal programmes so that they benefit from each other's strengths? How can they be integrated into a comprehensive EFA strategy and plan of action? The involvement of a broad spectrum of government policy-makers - in planning, finance, community development, agriculture, health, etc., together with the education authorities - was viewed by the Forum as crucial to achieving an effective integration of formal and nonformal education in an EFA perspective.

Above all, any expansion of nonformal basic education programmes should not be equated with the abandonment of the regular school system. The impact of an unplanned, uncontrolled expansion of non-formal programmes *«in a general climate of heavy criticism of public education and government withdrawal from primary schooling»* would be counter-productive. As one donor representative expressed it: *«Let's not forget that there is a formal system, and that most of the children in the world are in this system. We need to make that formal system worthwhile going to.»*

CURSOS COMUNITARIOS

TAKING SCHOOLS TO CHILDREN IN MEXICO

An innovative, non-formal solution to the problem of extending primary education to children in remote reas: Mexico's Cursos Comunitarios (Community Courses) was begun in 1973 to provide primary education to children living in scattered rural hamlets unreached by the regular schools. Faced with the challenge of a one-room rural school, where a teacher must work with children of different ages and capacities, **Cursos Comunitarios** (CC) developed a flexible multi-grade curriculum that provides actual, not formal equivalence to the regular schools. National in scale, local in conception and scope, CC are funded and managed by the government, but accountable to the communities it services.

Micro-schools, **Cursos Comunitarios** attend to Mexico's «scattered population» and average a dozen students each. In 1981 the programme reached a high point of 17,198 courses with 344,000 students in 7,000 communities, which account for 8% of Mexico's schools.

The **Cursos Comunitarios** have several exemplary components:

* **Para-professional teachers are drawn from the local community**: CC swaps social service for scholarships by giving young men and women of rural background a 3-year grant to further their own education after 2-3 years of teaching. The system benefits from the teachers cultural and developmental proximity to the learners.

* **Strong ties between the community and the programme:** Parents and hamlets are responsible for providing the locale for the school and arranging for the instructor; the instructors, who live in the communities, are accountable to the community and can monitor progress of individual children.

* **A locally relevant & nationally equivalent curriculum:** Combining local, rural contexts and cultural knowledge, the CC curriculum aims at durable learning. While CC does not «teach to the test» it does teach basic competencies equivalent to Mexico's nationallly tested norms.

* **Innovative teaching structure:** Adapted to multi-grade teaching in a one-room school, the CC uses a highly flexible, modular, «cyclical curriculum» in which children of different ages repeat concepts, at different developmental levels.

Lessons learned: «*The experience of CC confirms the fact that the unreached cannot be reached through cheap compensatory programmes. Alternatives require resources, particularly at the developmental stage, yet they can be cost-effective if integrated into a unified system.*» Elsie Rockwell, Researcher at the Center For Research and Advanced Studies (IPN).

(Source : Presentation by Elsie Rockwell)

FINANCING QUALITY BASIC EDUCATION

Financing improvements in the quality of education is not just a matter of finding additional resources; it also involves the efficient and effective use of existing resources. This «quality of management» was viewed by the Forum as a critical priority for governments, donor agencies, communities and individual schools. While the provision of quality basic education *is* economically feasible, the goal of EFA will remain elusive unless changes are made in the way countries finance and manage education.

The Forum examined three general strategies that have been used to improve the quality of educational services: reallocating available resources, de-centralizing decision-making and revenue raising, and targeting resources on strategic investments.

CUTTING COSTS ... BUT NOT QUALITY OR EQUITY

World Bank representatives, as well as other Forum participants, argued that greater efficiency and effectiveness in basic education programmes can be, and have been, achieved by: *re-allocating resources* to provide essential material inputs (e.g., textbooks and exercise books); *implementing cost-cutting measures* such as introducing multiple shifts and multi-grade classes; and *improving educational management*, for example, through incentives for teachers and the use of management information systems.

The resulting improvements in the quality of educational services have proven, over time, to be largely self-financing through consequent reductions in other educational and social costs. Quality improvements can also lead to an increase in the quantity - or availability - of educational provision. For example, investments in quality have substantially reduced drop out and repetition rates, which have in turn freed up places for new-entrants.

The positive effect of better material inputs is readily understandable, but the benefits of cost-cutting measures are less apparent. While the Forum recognized the economic benefits of measures to reduce per pupil costs, such as increasing the ratio of pupils per teacher, operating two or more shifts in crowded schools, and using multi-grade teaching in sparsely populated areas, several educators expressed concern that such measures might, in certain cases, impact negatively on classroom conditions for both learners and teachers. For example, increasing the size of classes in poor communities, where children often come from large families that are unable to give them the individual, out-of-class support and attention they need, could reinforce their disadvantages and increase inequities in the delivery of quality basic education.

Multiple shifts, another cost-cutting measure often advocated, also present dangers: while they may reduce per pupil costs and thus free funds for other educational investments, they can occasion other costs through the stress they bring to bear on already over-stretched and poorly paid teachers. One educator observed: «*Using double shifts with the same teachers puts a tremendous burden on them that will increase the burnout... and we must recognise that poor teaching conditions means poorer learning conditions.*»

THE LIMITS OF DECENTRALIZATION

National budgets in many countries simply cannot support the cost of providing quality basic education for all school-age children. In this situation, the benefits of decentralization and greater community participation are particularly attractive. For example, Vietnam, one of the poorest countries in the world, has been a leader in exploring this solution. It has achieved gross enrolment ratios over 90 per cent largely through expanded efforts at community level.

However, the Forum's discussion on decentralization - the process of transferring decision-making power and revenue-raising responsibilities from higher to lower levels of government and to community organizations - pointed out possible limitations and potential dangers in the realm of education. Often, governments tend to equate decentralization with the «extraction» of local resources. Many participants warned that the central government in certain countries had used decentralization to shirk its responsibility for financing basic education. One speaker said: *«Many governments are interested in decentralization because they lack resources. In essence, all they have decentralized is their poverty!»*

In several countries, the decentralization of decision-making and revenue raising responsibilities to municipalities, which often lack adequate monitoring and accountability structures, has yielded negative results. In Brazil, for example, the devolution of responsibility for primary education to municipal authorities foundered on excessive political interference.

If decentralization is not monitored closely and accompanied by the targeting of additional resources for females and marginalized populations, it can shift an unfair burden of funding education to disadvantaged communities. This in turn can result in gaping disparities in the resources available to schools in different localities. In such situations, decentralization has backfired, reinforcing socio-economic inequities rather than overcoming them, and embedding them in the quality of education children receive.

Gross educational disparities created or reinforced by rapid and poorly implemented decentralization policies have even led some governments - notably China, Chile, and Brazil - to a partial or wholesale reversal of the entire financial reform process. In the words of one donor representative: *«Increasingly, governments are trying to make up for the deficiencies of their decentralization programmes by recentralizing.»*

Despite this critical evaluation, the Forum reaffirmed its support for decentralization that is well monitored, includes targeting of central resources, and is linked to greater community involvement in the full management of revenues. *«If communities are not made to be responsible, in some way, for raising revenues, they won't be able to make responsible expenditures.»*

SELLING THE EFA AGENDA

Strategies for making education investment an attractive priority for governments and for donor agencies was a major point of discussion. Participants from donor agencies and NGOs pointed out difficulties in *«selling»* education and the EFA agenda both within their organizations and to governments. They also stressed the need to relate educational outcomes to proven, quantifiable returns that relate to other development issues.

Increased investment in basic education, at both national and international levels, will depend to a large degree on the ability of key EFA supporters to link such investment to the broader development agenda. The Forum felt that particular efforts should be made to show policy-makers the high returns on education investment in terms of increased productivity, a better skilled work force, stable population growth, and improved health. In the words of one speaker: *«We need to convince governments that the best way to improve education is not by decreasing funding but by increasing it, and that countries that invest in quality education are more productive and better able to compete in the global economy...To do this we have to relate investment in education to other development issues and to the welfare of the nation.»*

A PACKAGE THAT HOLDS TOGETHER

Targeting girls' and women's education - which has a proven high social rate of return and immediate, often dramatic results in improved health, lower

infant mortality rates, and declining fertility - was cited by several donor and government speakers as one of the most effective ways to place education higher on their agendas. *«To focus on girls' and women's education is to present our leadership with a package that is measurable, targetable, and that has the political appeal of being relevant to other programmes as well.»* This argument is well-supported by recent World Bank development reports, *«which all make the point that if we want to attain sustainable growth in other areas we need to pay particular attention to the education of girls and women.»*

The impact of girls' and women's education on a country's overall development goals was cited as a major «selling point» to convince governments and development agencies that this is an urgent and strategic investment. Donor agencies and NGOs, it was suggested, should select countries that lag behind in girls' and women's education and target them for advocacy and co-operation. Early childhood education and inter-generational education programmes for girls and women were cited as examples of *«packages that hold together»* and that could be presented to governments and donor agencies for funding. Both are relevant to a wide range of development issues (e.g. health, nutrition, AIDS prevention) and have proven to be an important factor in preparing girls for formal schooling.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

The weak, sometimes non-existent, information base in poorer countries, it was agreed, had seriously hampered the ability of governments, donor agencies, NGOs, communities, and schools to make informed and strategic decisions regarding the allocation and targeting of scarce resources for education. More generally, the lack of empirical information documenting education investments and outcomes was singled out by Forum participants as a major obstacle to informed decision-making and efficient financial management. As one participant put it: *«We need a system for measuring <u>how</u> we are doing and how EFA is contributing to other development issues.»*

The introduction of a comprehensive «EFA index» that would track both government budget reallocations to basic education and NGO and parental expenditures was proposed, but some participants from donor agencies expressed doubts about the feasibility of such an index. They suggested that more case studies could help to identify trends and patterns and to draw conclusions needed for the strategic targeting of resources. Other participants called for more information sharing among EFA partners. Another idea mooted was to establish a database to monitor EFA efforts and the social and economic costs incurred by countries that have failed to support or progress towards EFA goals.

NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SELF RELIANCE

The Forum recalled one of the Jomtien messages to governments to *«put their own house in order»* by first examining their own budgets and reallocating resources to education - before approaching donor agencies. Governments in many developing countries have relied too heavily on external donor funding but still have failed to provide quality education for all. One participant from a developing country observed: *«Top educators and decision-makers who lack confidence in their own school systems tend to send their own children abroad. Hence, it is not surprising that there is no commitment to quality.»*

In seeking internal resources for education, central governments could foster «broad-based coalitions» or partnerships involving local communities, schools, NGOs and business. Recent experiments with local partnerships in the United States, where cuts in the federal education budget beginning in the 1980s reduced educational expenditure by 30 per cent over a 12-year period, were cited as an example of local initiative, although under duress. However, some speakers warned that this path could lead to the privatization of education and that public funds should not be diverted to private schools. ■

ROUNDTABLES

BASIC EDUCATION FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN*

Despite widespread recognition that the education of girls and women is a *sine qua non* for development, as well as a basic human right, there is still little evidence of the priority attention to this aspect of EFA called for by the Jomtien Conference in 1990. The Roundtable on Basic Education for Girls and Women began by reviewing the situation, which remains alarming.

Women comprise 60 per cent of the world's illiterate adults, and girls constitute the vast, silent majority of children un-reached by the formal school system. Even when girls and women do gain access to education, the quality and duration of their education is often severely compromised. In much of the developing world, girls' and women's enrolment rates are perilously low, and their absenteeism and drop-out rates are high. While parents tend to view the education of boys as desirable, even vital for the economic well-being of the family and the community, they often view girls' education as a dispensable luxury that can be interrupted at any time.

In traditional, developing societies where women's literacy rates and girl's school enrolment rates are lowest, studies have identified several factors that militate against the provision of quality basic education: distance between home and school; scarcity of female teachers; lack of day care facilities; lack of separate schools or toilet facilities for girls; and perceived irrelevance of the curriculum for girls' traditional roles.

How can this critical situation be reversed? How can parents, communities and governments be convinced that educating girls and women is a highly cost-effective investment that contributes, in the end, to their own welfare? Even more importantly, how can girls and women themselves be made aware of their right to education and the value of their contribution to society? In practical terms, how can formal and non-formal programmes be designed to ensure that the same quality of basic education is made available to females as to males? These were the main questions posed at the roundtable.

Three broad conclusions emerged from the discussions and from the examples presented. To effect lasting, large-scale change and to achieve broader development goals, girls' and women's education must be *inter-generational*, *simultaneous*, and *integrated*.

The most effective programmes, it was agreed, offer an inter-generational «package» that combines easily accessible education for mothers, baby girls (early childhood development), and young, school-age girls. In developing countries, and especially in remote areas, the inter-generational approach solves a host of logistical and practical problems. Since girls are expected to help care for younger siblings, they are unable to attend schools located far from their homes. It is thus imperative that the education of mothers and daughters be coordinated and that schools be located near their homes and the early childhood development centres where younger brothers and sisters can be cared for.

Pre-school education, as proven by India's experience, has helped to dramatically increase the enrolment of girl children in primary schools. One strategy adopted in this regard: the provision of free day care centers for small children helps girls above 6 years of age to attend school.

** The topic of this roundtable was also a transversal theme for the four thematic sessions; consequently much of the discussion concerning the education of girls and women is reported in those sections of this report.*

In what sense should education for girls and women be simultaneous? Studies show that literate mothers tend to demand more education for themselves and their daughters. Literate mothers also tend to seek paid employment and then spend part of their income on improving the nutrition, health and education of their children. Literate women also tend to have fewer but healthier children who live longer.

Girls' and women's education programmes are more likely to succeed when they respond to local concerns and are seen to be linked to economic benefits for the community. Consequently, girls' and women's literacy courses should be integrated into other social improvement activities. Parents and communities must be educated first to the needs and benefits of educating females, both the moral obligation, and the practical and financial advantages of educating daughters, sisters and wives, as well as male family members.

The roundtable presented examples of several strategies and programmes to illustrate what can be done to promote the basic education of girls and women:

*CREATING PHYSICAL ACCESS

Girls and women who live in sparsely populated or remote areas often fail to attend school because of purely geographic or physical barriers. To overcome this problem education should be made available in the communities where girls and women actually live or very nearby. The creation of residential facilities for poor girls, especially at the secondary level, can be a definite incentive to enrolling girls in school. Such facilities created in rural and mountainous areas in China increased girls' enrolment by 90 per cent.

*BUILDING SOCIAL AWARENESS

It was widely agreed that parental awareness of and responsiblity for girls' education was the crux of the problem. The Mohalla schools in Pakistan and the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) programme reportedly have been successful in this regard. «*Parents must perceive that education is given for converting girls into economic assets and self-reliant individuals.*» In some societies, the introduction of vocational training for girls can increase parental and community awareness of a woman's earning power. Studies show that when employment opportunities exist, or are perceived to exist, for girls and women, they receive better education.

*GENDER SENSITIVE TEACHERS

Teachers, both male and female, are powerful role models and agents of socialization. Consequently, their professional training should include gender sensitization so that they are prepared to accomodate the needs of female learners. Without this sensitivity, teachers often unconsciously reinforce stereotypes of dependency and domesticity, and discourage girls from taking scientific and technical subjects that have traditionally been considered «male» subjects. Male and female teachers should be trained to build on the initiative and creative energies of girls in order to help them view themselves as more active, participatory, economically productive members of society.

*AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY CURRICULUM

The concept of «relevance» can be controversial when applied to girls and women's education, especially in respect to science, mathematics, and vocational subjects, which parents may not view as «relevant» to women's traditional roles. Educators should strive to ensure that these subjects are presented in a manner that is attractive to boys and girls. What is deemed «relevant» for boys should be made accessible to girls as well. Parents and teachers should encourage girls to study math and science, and to enroll in vocational courses, which can enhance their self-image as productive and employable citizens, and raise their status within the community.

*MORE FEMALE TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

Recruiting teachers from among women in villages and small towns can lead to the increased enrolment of girl pupils in rural areas. Providing residential facilities for female teachers in the Communities where they teach is another measure used to attract and retain women teachers, and thereby to increase demand for basic education for girls. Roundtable participants also pointed to the need to hire more women administrators and supervisers.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

INTERIM STRATEGIES

Flexible school hours to accomodate girls responsibilities at home and distance education have been used successfully in some developing countries to increase access of girls and women to basic education. While it was agreed that such measures may be effective as part of an interim strategy, some participants warned that special programmes for girls and women could lead to the emergence of a two-track education system of unequal quality for boys and girls.

The roundtable concluded with a call for renewed and firm commitment to compulsory education for **all**. *«If we have a basic platform that children be required to go to school to get an education, and we work with governments to achieve that goal, then we will not need to devise special strategies for girls.»*

LOK JUMBISH «THE PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT»

Launched in 1992 in Rajasthan, India's poorest state, the Lok Jumbish or «People's Movement Project» is a joint effort of , the Government of India, the Government of Rajasthan and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), in a 2:1:3 ratio. Faced with a situation of extreme educational backwardness, where 40 per cent of all children aged 6-11 and 55-60 per cent of all girls in this age group were out of school, Lok Jumbish adopted a four-fold strategy:

* **Special focus on education of girls and women:** This was the core challenge - *«unless a systematic effort is made to improve women's access to education, it will not be possible to achieve the objective of education for all by the year 2000.»* Lok Jumbish focuses not only on society's attitudes towards women, but also on women's self-image. The goal is to create a new awareness of women's roles and status in the family and in society, via *«Mahila Samooh»*, women's collectives, and through the provision of incentives and support services.

* **Mobilizing the people** - Total community involvement in the actual planning of universal primary education at the village level was also a critical challenge. Strategies included the use of «core» teams of 8-9 people (equal numbers of men and women) to conduct extensive school mapping and micro-planning - the only way to realistically assess the availability of educational facilities in India's rural areas.

* **Improving the status of teachers:** - Lok Jumbish confronted the challenge of motivating and training teachers who suffered from low social status, self-image, and hence low motivation - on any given day 30 per cent were reportedly absent from the schools. Strategies to restore confidence and professional pride included provision of recurrent training and the inclusion of teachers in the «core» teams that conduct mapping and which monitor the progress of every child. This has led to higher motivation and improved accountability to the community. *«We have created a new way of life for teachers that is really beginning to transform things» reports one Lok Jumbish coordinator.*

* **Comprehensive improvement of the quality of primary education**, including reform of the content and the introduction of a more non-formal process of education. *«We are trying to create an interactive, activity-based type of education that will give children more contact with their environment, and move learners away from sitting and being taught.»*

Another major thrust of Lok Jumbish was the creation of a new, participatory management culture - **both a de-centralization and a de-formalization of management** - that would enthuse the communities by drawing them into the process of school mapping and micro-planning.

The core success of the Lok Jumbish movement have been the *«Mahila Samooh»*, or women's collectives, that first empower and then mobilize women to take an active role in the community and in the planning of their own education. The strategy began by identifying a *«sathin»* or women with leadership qualities, who inspires and creates the *«samooh»* or consciousness-raising group of women. The *samooh* then takes over, actively protecting and advocating the interests of girls' education. The *Mahila Samooh* offer women a comprehensive spiritual and material support system and path to self-realization: *«We are trying to change women's perceptions of themselves, rather than merely offering women material incentives, like clothes...and we are insisting that all girls come to school as part of this new idea of their role».*
(Source: The Lok Jumbish Project, 1992.)

NEW PARTNERSHIPS FOR EFA

The global economic crisis and its impact on public funding for education have sharply refocused government and public attention on the need for partnerships in delivering quality Education for All (EFA). Global trends towards the democratization and decentralization of education systems, and greater local participation in the management of schools have led to the emergence of an increasing number and variety of partnerships in education.

GOVERNMENTS, BUT NOT ALONE

At the Jomtien Conference, governments were already aware that they alone simply cannot finance and deliver quality basic Education for All. With external funding for basic education on a plateau due to stagnant, even declining aid budgets and competing demands for available aid funds, national partnerships between government, business, local communities, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have become an attractive option to make better use of existing funding and to expand the resource base.

As governments seek ways to decentralize the education bureaucracy, de-formalize schools, and equalize educational opportunities, they are looking to collaborate with strong, innovative, partners. Whether these partners are NGOs, private businesses, community or religious groups, or international donor agencies, their collaboration in planning, financing, and delivering education, as well as introducing innovations, is no longer viewed as a luxury or an experiment: it has become indispensable. As one participant observed: «*We have gone from saying that partnerships can contribute to achieving EFA to saying that they are essential to achieving it - to ensuring greater a supply of, and access to more relevant, higher quality, basic education*». Forming, managing, and sustaining partnerships, however, is no easy matter. Promoting partnerships in remote and marginal areas where they are often most needed is a particular challenge.

With the benefits of partnerships are already clear, the roundtable sought to critically evaluate the conditions in which they can thrive and to point to new directions for their development.

NGOs IN EFA

One focus of the discussion was the role of NGOs, both international and national (i.e. indigenous, local), in initiating and participating in partnerships. It was noted that many international NGOs are seeking to expand their role as «brokers» who can link national NGOs and even governments with funding sources. In general, within the last five years or so, NGOs have emerged as important actors in EFA. Many are now capable of offering competent and professional leadership and management in the field of nonformal education. The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) was again cited as an example of how strong, well-managed NGOs can manage even mass programmes.

In discussing such success stories, the roundtable noted an encouraging move towards more systemic, larger-scale NGO education activities and away from the «pearl in a dung heap» approach, which focuses energy on one small area. It also identified several aspects of partnerships between NGOs and governments, as well as among NGOs themselves, that could be improved:

* The need to reconcile differences in philosophy, management styles, planning cycles, cost structures, etc. between governments and NGOs, but also between donor agencies and NGOs and between national and international NGOs. *«There is a need to address a vast messy area of suspicion and distrust that goes far beyond government and non-government relations»*, according to one participant.

* The need for more cooperation among NGOs, both to share resources, training opportunities, data bases, etc., and to develop a more coordinated and credible programme of action with the government. *«There is a sense that the NGO community must put their own house in order so they may gain greater credibility.»*

* The need to recognize the increasing differentiation among NGOs active in developing countries: while there are still many that aim to «serve» by providing a range of social services in the traditional philanthropic role, there is now a new generation, often working with small, indigenous, community-level NGOs, that act as policy advocates, brokers, catalysts, and capacity-builders.

* The need to address the special problems of international NGOs: for example, the way agendas are too often set according to good intentions rather assessed needs; the distortion of basic messages to suit the requirements and pressures of fund-raising (good news does not sell well); continued dependence on the philanthropic «amateur» rather than professional manager; and, finally, the preference for highly visible impact in one small place rather than broader impact on development policy or practice.

BUSINESS - A VESTED INTEREST IN EDUCATION

The renewed interest of the private sector in education partnerships, triggered by the global economic situation, was another subject taken up by the roundtable. The rationale to invest in an educated and informed workforce has traditionally led business to focus on technical and vocational training, or to link education with employment opportunities. However, the roundtable noted that this focus seems to be shifting: the private sector is now also engaging in partnerships in basic education. This trend is evident in a variety of strategies, e.g., «adopt-a-school» schemes and special projects to support education in geographically or economically marginal areas.

Several participants argued that private sector participation should include the role that employer and worker organizations can play in providing education, particularly at the local level. *«Not only can these organizations play an important role in providing basic skills, they can also influence government policy, facilitate the access of vulnerable groups, and change community attitudes towards girls' education.»* The roundtable noted, however, that expanded private sector involvement in determining education policy will require sensitizing and training business people: *«The business community will have to be educated, not just in terms of a philanthropic attitude, but in terms of a more enlightened approach to education»*, advised one participant.

COMMUNITIES AS PARTNERS

A number of participants advocated an expansion of the definition of partnerships to the entire range of community support groups - including, but not limited to, workers' and employers' organizations, child care and health groups, women's groups, and parent-teacher associations. Such voluntary groups can play very active roles in local education partnerships. *«Volunteer agencies don't think of their participation just in terms of money. Volunteers can help mobilize people. When the children of the un-educated drop out of school, volunteers can go out and talk to the parents and motivate them to send their children back»*, observed one speaker.

Owing to their proximity and access to local communities, the unique contribution these partners can make is not easily replaced by government or international organizations. Community groups provide vital support systems for both in-school and out-of-school learners: *«Many people fail to realize that children come to school without these support systems. We must ensure that these support systems are in place if we are going to provide quality education for all»*. Creating a more open dialogue between the education authorities and local communities so that schools become more transparent and responsive to the community was identified as a useful policy measure.

DONORS INITIATE AND MEDIATE

Generally viewed as a neutral third party, donor agencies have sometimes intervened with government and NGO actors in EFA to initiate, mediate and support partnerships between them. It was suggested that donors could provide technical and financial support for experimental partnership mechanisms. Donors could also help build capacities for EFA activities in NGOs and business, so that they can act as effective partners with the education authorities.

Some donor agencies are increasingly sub-contracting NGOs to implement projects - a sign of improved NGO credibility and professionalism. «*As recently as four years ago, we had nothing to do with NGOs. Now we use them on the supply side, as deliverers and implementors of projects*», noted one donor agency. The roundtable felt this practice would probably spread as the various parties learned more about each other's capacities.

CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Governments are usually best placed to create an enabling and friendly environment for EFA partnerships, but other actors can also take the initiative. While partnerships vary widely from country to country, it was agreed that they generally work more effectively within a policy context that favours participatory approaches to development and within a decentralized education system characterized by a fair degree of autonomy at lower levels.

In summing up the discussion, the roundtable moderator concluded: «*This will not happen by itself, or by fiat, but rather must be planned with supportive legislation, policies, and programmes, with training in appropriate knowledge, attitudes and skills, and with adequate resources for partnerships to operate*». ■

EDUCATION AND THE MEDIA

Education and the media are, or should be, natural allies and stakeholders in each other's future. With the approach of the 21st Century and the «global information superhighway», there is little doubt in the minds of government leaders and educators that the mass media will play a decisive role in shaping public expectations of, demand for, and access to, education. *«While media and technology cannot and should not be a substitute for teachers, their impact has raised the expectations of learners of all ages»*, said one panelist.

Although the mass media and the global communications networks could be major partners in extending quality basic Education for All (EFA), educators and media makers often have strikingly different agendas, values, and objectives. While education is an incremental, lifelong process concerned with individuals, the media are part of a fast-paced, global industry that focuses on products and mass markets. Unlike the media, education is slow to change. How to bridge the gap between these two very different but complementary worlds was the main topic of discussion for the Roundtable on the Contribution of the Media to EFA.

THE MEDIA AND THE EFA AGENDA

The relationship between media makers and educators, although potentially synergistic, has been fraught with misunderstanding on both sides. The gulf between the two worlds stems from the very different nature of education and the media. *«Media making is a very immediate process, and education is a very-long term process... the media need to understand education as a process, and not as a product»*, suggested one media representative.

Media-makers present at the roundtable agreed that news coverage and reporting rarely seek to inform in depth or educate, but rather to transmit and «sell» news in a fast and highly competitive marketplace. Consequently, the news media often fail to give adequate coverage to education issues, tending to boil them down into black and white. One panelist observed: *«What qualifies as education news according to current standards often concerns political battles over funding, resources, and salaries, or more sensational stories about the failure of education»*.

The pressures of the media industry, however, are not entirely to blame for the poor quality of education reporting. Media representatives criticized educators for being *«insular and resistant to working with the media»* and for failing to educate reporters and provide them with all the information needed to cover an education story. Educators were urged to take a more active role in shaping news coverage of education by *«harnessing it to their own agenda»*.

BENEFITS OF COOPERATION

The advantages of expanded cooperation between education and the media are obvious. Sometimes referred to as the «third channel» of basic education, the media - both traditional and modern - offer a range of alternative, innovative, informal, and life-long learning opportunities that are very much in line with the «expanded vision of basic education» endorsed at Jomtien.

The complementary expertise and skills of media makers and educators were identified as a starting point for partnerships: *«The bottom line is that media makers have expertise in production, and educators have*

expertise in content». Beyond any social responsibility to work towards providing quality education for all, media makers stressed the vested interest that their industry has in educating their audiences, which in turn creates greater demand for their «product»: «*Increasingly, the media are looking at education as an important market for which they can produce materials*».

A DEMOCRATIZING EFFECT

Education through the media, it was pointed out, can have a powerful democratizing effect on education by helping to de-formalize and enliven the learning process, making it «*more interesting, more engaging, more relevant*». When media are used interactively, they can contribute to more innovative and less formal kinds of teaching and learning. Because young students often have more familiarity with modern media than their teachers, they are more active participants in the learning process. «*Teachers become collaborators of sort, not just transmitters of information, but animators of their students' intellectual and creative potential.*»

The media can also be powerful providers of information and education combined with entertainment to service adult and other out-of-school learners neglected by formal education. «*Because the media seek to inform and entertain at the same time, they have valuable lessons to share with educators on how to accomplish these sometimes conflicting objectives.*»

PROMOTING GREATER INVOLVEMENT IN EFA

The need to increase community and private sector involvement in EFA initiatives was also cited by media makers as a compelling reason why education and the media should work together: «*The media move back and forth between informing, entertaining, marketing, distributing, and promoting. This expertise in different sectors can serve to enhance greater public involvement in education.*» The mass media, it was noted, provide citizens with important public forums for discussion and consensus building.

The roundtable identified several key areas for new or expanded partnerships between media and education:

*MORE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Educational programming was considered by panelists as a priority area for increased cooperation. The paucity of educational programming, however, is a problem that, for commercial reasons, is not likely to be solved in the near future. In most countries no more than 5 per cent of broadcasting time is devoted to educational programmes, while the rest is entertainment, advertising, news, and propaganda.

Nevertheless, throughout the world and particularly in developing countries, both the traditional and modern media are being used to inform the public about important survival issues - AIDS prevention, family planning, immunization, and child survival. There is also considerable evidence that the mass media are far more effective in producing behavioural change than had been previously thought. These findings, it was agreed, should inspire both educators and media makers to expand their cooperation. Media makers also urged educators to take advantage of the already vast media archives and materials available to them.

It was suggested that *media education* - i.e. about the media and their use - should be introduced in the school curriculum at an early age (7-14 years), especially in the developing world, where governments are concerned about the negative effects of what is perceived as an invasion of cross-border Western television programming and values. Educators stressed the need to «immunize» young children against the potentially disorienting cultural impact of the mass media, especially television. «*Children must be educated to the realities of the media so that they can develop a more critical view. They must be told that this is fiction, that this is an industry, that the people they watch on television are actors.*»

*COMBINING TRADITIONAL AND MODERN MEDIA

Linking modern and traditional media, such as folk theatre, dance, and festivals, is an area of potential collaboration between the media and education, especially in the developing world. In countries like India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, television has used traditional drama, poetry, and music effectively to convey educational messages. Encouraging a greater reliance on the traditional media, in combination with print and electronic media, has tremendous advantages. Traditional media are low cost and can reach those not easily served by the advanced mass media. For educators, the traditional media also have the advantage of providing face-to-face contact and instant feedback around messages that can be easily understood. The traditional media can also help preserve national and ethnic identities in the face of the cultural homogenization via the mass media. This last benefit is particularly important in many developing countries, which have legitimate concerns that television and the Western mass media have made them passive consumers of the programming and tastes of the industrialized world.

*A NEW LITERACY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Teaching a new kind of literacy for the 21st Century is another urgent task facing the media-education partnership. Literacy has traditionally been associated with the print media - learning to read and write, and by extension, to calculate. However, as we proceed into the Information Age, true «literacy» will increasingly comprise mastery of a wide range of sophisticated information technologies and media. *«Today, literacy doesn't stop with words and numbers. It must also address the process of understanding and using the mass media.»*

Teachers will have to be appropriately trained or re-trained if they are to empower their students to access and use the information technologies of the 21st Century. *«A critical lesson for educators is to learn how to use media material...Educators must overcome their fear and ignorance of technology...they must learn to control it and not be controlled by it,»* advised one speaker. Instructional methods will also have to be adapted to incorporate the new media. *«Just as in the realm of print, it doesn't make sense to teach reading without writing, students must learn to understand and use the new language of video.»*

*PRINT MEDIA AGAINST ILLITERACY

Increasing access to the print media should not be neglected in media and education partnerships. Illiteracy, as traditionally defined, remains a staggering problem in much of the developing world. *«Despite the vast, global communications network, at least one-third of the world's adult population has no daily access to print knowledge. Nor do they have the skills or resources to use the new information technologies.»* Educators called attention to the vital role that the print media, specifically newspapers, can still play in maintaining and developing literacy skills. For example, by providing special columns and sections for neo-literates and young readers, newspapers can play an important role in the campaign to eradicate adult illiteracy.

ANNEXES

EFA FORUM PROGRAMME

	8 SEPTEMBER	9 SEPTEMBER	10 SEPTEMBER
MORNING	(International Literacy Day ceremony)	Review of Progress toward EFA	TOPIC 3
	Inaugural Session	TOPIC 1	Improving nonformal education programmes
		Early childhood development	
AFTERNOON	Roundtable A * NEW PARTNERSHIPS IN EDUCATION FOR ALL		
	Roundtable B * BASIC EDUCATION FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN	TOPIC 2	TOPIC 4
		Improving primary schooling	Financing quality basic education
	Roundtable C * THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE MEDIA TO EFA		
	Reception	Reception	Closing Session

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WEDNESDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER

INAUGURAL SESSION

Welcome:	MR S.V. GIRI Secretary, Department of Education, India
Remarks:	MS SELHA Deputy Minister, Education and Culture, India
Keynote address:	MR FEDERICO MAYOR Director-General, UNESCO
Inaugural address:	MR ARJUN SINGH Minister of Human Resource Development, India

AFTERNOON SESSION

Chair:	MR WILLIAM THOMSON Vice President, Asian Development Bank
	ROUNDTABLE A: NEW PARTNERSHIPS IN EDUCATION FOR ALL
Moderator:	MR ERLING DESSAU, Resident Representative United Nations Development Programme, India
	ROUNDTABLE B: BASIC EDUCATION FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN
Moderator:	MS MIRA SETH, Member Planning Commission, India
	ROUNDTABLE C: THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE MEDIA TO EFA
Moderator:	MS MARY FONTAINE, Executive Director United States Coalition for Education for All

THURSDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER

MORNING SESSION

Chair: MS KONAI HELU-THAMAN, Pro Vice-Chancellor, University of the South Pacific, Fiji

REVIEW OF PROGRESS TOWARD EFA

Moderator: MR VICTOR ORDOÑEZ, Director, Basic Education Division, UNESCO

TOPIC 1 - EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Moderator: MR RIEN VAN GENDT, Executive Director Bernard van Leer Foundation, Netherlands

AFTERNOON SESSION

Chair: MR WALFRIDO S. DOS MARES GUIA NETO Secretário de Estado da Educaçao Estado de Minas Gerais, Brazil

TOPIC 2 - IMPROVING PRIMARY SCHOOLING

Moderator: MS WINSOME GORDON Programme Specialist, UNESCO

FRIDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER

MORNING SESSION

Chairman: MR JOHN SAMUEL, Head of Education Department African National Congress, South Africa

TOPIC 3 - IMPROVING NONFORMAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

Moderator: MR MANZOOR AHMED, Associate Director Programme Division, UNICEF

AFTERNOON SESSION

Chairman: MR S.V. GIRI, Secretary Department of Education, India

TOPIC 4 - FINANCING QUALITY BASIC EDUCATION

Moderator: MR ADRIAAN VERSPOOR, Policy Adviser Education & Social Policy Dept., World Bank

CLOSING REMARKS

MR RICHARD JOLLY Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF

EFA FORUM DOCUMENTS

- **EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT** (EFAForum 93.1) by the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development
- **IMPROVING SCHOOLING** (EFAForum 93.2) by UNESCO
- **IMPROVING NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES** (EFAForum 93.3) by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- **FINANCING QUALITY BASIC EDUCATION** (EFAForum 93.4) by Mun Tsang, on behalf of the World Bank
- **NEW PARTNERSHIPS IN EDUCATION FOR ALL** (EFAForum 93.A) by UNDP

ANNEX B

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY FEDERICO MAYOR DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF UNESCO

Mr Minister,
Mr Secretary,
Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to address you this morning on behalf of the four Convenors of this Forum: the executive heads of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Bank, and of course the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

I am pleased to note that nearly all of the organizations that joined us in sponsoring the World Conference on Education for All — the Jomtien Conference in 1990 — are also represented in this meeting, thus demonstrating their continuing commitment. And I am pleased also to see that several other organizations represented here have joined our alliance.

I wish to welcome each and every one of you and to thank you for having taken time away from your important work to advise and help the international community in following up the Jomtien Conference.

This Forum is a unique body in several respects. It has a revolving membership representing a mix of interests and capacities in dealing with basic education. The so-called North and South are both present here. Major bilateral and multilateral agencies involved in development cooperation are represented in good number. Officials of government agencies and of several kinds of nongovernmental bodies have an equal voice in this Forum. Many of you, but not all, are educators. Others among you bring to our deliberations important perspectives from other spheres of activity. Whatever our professional background, all of us, I am sure, are concerned about the destiny of mankind and believe that education is essential to shaping that destiny.

The format of the Forum's working sessions is also unusual in United Nations circles in that it is ***not*** *designed for presenting papers or reading speeches or reciting the achievements of our countries and organizations. After an initial presentation of each topic, the floor will be open for discussion. I hope very much that we can engage in a real dialogue over the next few days that will generate information and ideas that each of us can use in our respective programmes and in our cooperation with one another.*

You have all been invited in your personal capacity, which allows you, I hope, to speak frankly and share your insights and suggestions. All of your comments will be duly recorded.

As you should be aware, the Forum has developed into a useful focal point and mechanism for promoting and facilitating cooperation at global level. It has already spawned a number of «initiatives» to deal with particular issues, such as providing basic learning materials in resource poor environments and exploring ways for professionals in the media and in education to work effectively together. In fact, one of the roundtables this afternoon will introduce us to this latter Forum initiative, and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the United States Coalition for Education for All, which volunteered to take the lead in this important area.

Another kind of initiative, also inspired by the first meeting of the Forum in December 1991, is the forthcoming Education for All Summit of the Nine Populous Developing Countries, which will be hosted also in New Delhi by the Government of India in December. I will leave it to the next speaker, the Honourable Minister of Human Resource Development in India, to tell you more about this initiative. But I would like to point out that it represents a very significant model for cooperation among a set of countries sharing certain common educational concerns, with support from several intergovernmental and bilateral organizations.

We would welcome your guidance regarding the adaptation of this model for other sets of countries, as well as what new initiatives may be needed to help countries advance toward the goals agreed at Jomtien.

I would like - very briefly - to underline the importance of the theme of this meeting. Whereas the first meeting of the Forum focused on the prospects for achieving Universal Primary Education by the year 2000 — essentially, the quantitative dimension of Education for All — your meeting will examine the ***qualitative*** *dimension: how can we provide basic education of good quality for all people?*

I believe we need to consider «quality» with respect both to the ***process*** *and the* ***content*** *of basic education. The effectiveness of the teaching-learning process, as seen in actual learning achievement, is obviously an important aspect of quality, although it is one that is often difficult to measure. We must continue to seek ways to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of basic education programmes.*
This is certainly necessary, both for the sake of improving quality and for the good management of scarce resources.

At the same time, we must not neglect to examine quality in terms of the subject ***matter***, ***attitudes*** *and* ***skills*** *that are actually learned. Are they relevant to the individual's life? Do they equip him or her to continue learning throughout a lifetime of change? In other words, is the content of basic education meeting the basic learning needs of the learners?*

Moreover, we also need to consider whether the content of basic education is meeting the requirements for living in a social context, both local and global. Current events demonstrate all too clearly that basic education for the human race must include also those elements that foster tolerance, democratic behaviour, respect for human rights and dignity. Yes, it must include ***values****. These are essentials that cannot be postponed to higher education, nor even to secondary education.*

No doubt, the quality of basic education content is a sensitive area with significant socio-cultural, political and economic overtones. Of course this meeting is not expected to agree on some ideal basic education curriculum or general norms to be applied worldwide. But I do hope that your deliberations will inspire educators, governments and organizations to give more attention to this crucial aspect of Education for All.

This Forum serves as the conscience of the international community with respect to the actions we committed ourselves to three-and-a-half years ago at Jomtien. Your task includes monitoring the progress that is being made and pointing out promising new experiences, as well as the major problems on the horizon. To assist you in this task, the Forum's secretariat, which is based at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, has prepared a report entitled EDUCATION FOR ALL: STATUS AND TRENDS, which I am pleased to release officially today, International Literacy Day. All of you should have received an advance copy of this report. I recommend it to your attention, and I am sure that the Forum secretariat would welcome your suggestions regarding future issues of the report.

In this connection, we would also like to have your ideas concerning the mid-decade review of progress called for in the FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION TO MEET BASIC LEARNING NEEDS, agreed at Jomtien. The next meeting of the Forum will play an important role in this mid-term review process, so your suggestions, individual and collective, will guide us.

Finally, I would like to invite your observations and suggestions regarding how we can regain and even increase the momentum toward Education for All attained at Jomtien. In the face of the worldwide economic slowdown, reduced government budgets, and ever-emerging new priorities, how can we maintain basic education at an optimal level of attention on the world's crowded agenda?

Jomtien will represent a real turning-point in population trends, in human resource development, in economic growth, in rural and international migration patterns, in the formation of a new global vision if its targets are effectively attained. And this calls for new priorities in the agendas of nations, intergovernmental organizations and multinational enterprises. It presupposes a new blueprint for our common future. It demands a renewed faith in the UN system and a new commitment to disarmament. It implies sharing and reducing the intolerable gaps and asymmetries of today's world. It requires endogenous capacity-building. It means understanding that poverty, ignorance and marginalization are the roots of violence, extremism and conflict. It means a new dream - the dream UNESCO was created for: moral and intellectual solidarity throughout the world.

In closing, I wish to take this opportunity to express, on behalf of the Convenors, our deep gratitude to the Government of India and particularly the Minister of Human Resource Development, for so graciously hosting this second meeting of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All. Thanks to the exemplary collaboration between the host government and the organizers of this meeting, I am confident that we shall have a productive Forum and an enjoyable time together here in the vibrant capital of one of the oldest civilizations on our planet.

This civilization has been given vital re-expression in modern times by universal figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, with his supreme lesson of perseverance allied to non-violence, and I wish, here, to pay tribute to your great country for the example of temperance, imagination, tolerance and far-sightedness that it gives to the world as a whole. ■

ANNEX C

SECOND MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATIVE FORUM ON EDUCATION FOR ALL NEW DELHI, INDIA, 8-10 SEPTEMBER 1993

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